

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 27, as follows:

Jpn. Pat. Appln. KOKAI Publication No. 2001-158450 discloses a stopper for a test tube serving as a specimen container ~~as a prior art one as described above~~. The stopper has a columnar press-in section that is detachably inserted into the opening of the test tube. The columnar press-in section has a smooth outer surface. Thus, the outside diameter of the press-in section has to be perfectly consistent with the inside diameter of the opening of the test tube.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 7, as follows:

A stopper for tube-shaped specimen containers comprises an inserting section that is pushed into an opening of a tube-shaped specimen container, a closing section that continues ~~with~~ from the inserting section and has a flat surface that is brought into intimate contact with a rim of the opening, and an operating section that continues ~~with~~ from the closing section and operates to insert/remove the inserting section into/from the opening, wherein the inserting section is formed of an elastically-deformable liquid-tight member, and an annular flange section is projected from an outer surface of a cylindrical body such that a periphery of the annular flange section is liquid-tightly pressed on an inner surface of the opening of the tube-shaped specimen container.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 20, as follows:

The stopper 20 is formed of a liquid-tight member that can be at least elastically deformed, such as polypropylene resin. The stopper 20 includes an inserting section 21, a disk-shaped closing section 22 and a disk-shaped operating section 23. The inserting section 21 is pushed into the opening 11 of the tube-shaped specimen container 10. The closing section 22 continues ~~with~~ from the inserting section 21 and has a flat surface H that can be brought into

intimate contact with the rim of the opening 11. The operating section 23 continues ~~with~~from the closing section 22 and operates to insert/remove the inserting section 21 into/from the opening 11. An annular groove 24 is formed between the closing and operating sections 22 and 23 to easily pick up the operating section 23.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 8, as follows:

The inserting section 21 includes a cylindrical body A having a hollow G inside. Two annular flange sections B (B1, B2) are formed on the outer surface of the cylindrical body A at a fixed interval in the axial direction of the cylindrical body A. Each of the annular flange sections B (B1, B2) is shaped like a parabolic antenna and its insertion end (lower end in FIG. 2) is tapered. The thickness of each flange section B (B1, B2) is set to about 0.55 mm to 0.75 mm (favorably 0.65 mm) such that it can be deformed sufficiently elastically. A plurality of (four in this embodiment) notches V1 to V4 are formed in the concave side of each flange section B (B1, B2) at 90-degree intervals in the circumferential direction such that the outside diameter of each flange section can relatively easily be varied by the surrounding compressive force when the inserting section 21 is pressed into the opening 11 of the specimen container 10. Thus, the periphery of the flange sections B (B1, B2) can be pressed liquid-tightly ~~be pressed~~ on the inner surface of the opening 11 of the specimen container 10.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 3, as follows:

In the stopper 20 according to the embodiment of the present invention, the flange sections B (B1, B2), which can be deformed greatly elastically, are formed at a fixed interval on the outer surface of the cylindrical body A. Therefore, even though the inside diameter of the opening 11 slightly differs from that of the regular-sized opening, the opening 11 can ~~very~~be liquid-tightly ~~be~~ sealed with the stopper 20 of the same size.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 13, as follows:

[1] A stopper 20 for tube-shaped specimen containers according to an embodiment of the present invention, comprises an inserting section 21 that is pushed into an opening 11 of a tube-shaped specimen container 10, a closing section 22 that continues ~~with~~from the inserting section 21 and has a flat surface H that is brought into intimate contact with a rim of the opening 11, and an operating section 23 that continues ~~with~~from the closing section 22 and operates to insert/remove the inserting section 21 into/from the opening 11. The stopper 20 is characterized in that the inserting section 21 is formed of an elastically-deformable liquid-tight member, and an annular flange section B is projected from an outer surface of a cylindrical body A such that a periphery of the annular flange section is liquid-tightly pressed on an inner surface of the opening 11 of the tube-shaped specimen container 10.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 4, as follows:

When the inserting section 21 of the stopper 20 is inserted into the opening 11 of the tube-shaped specimen container 10, the annular flange section B is compressed in the axial direction of the container 10 by the inner surface of the opening 11. Part of the cylindrical body A is also compressed and somewhat elastically deformed. Consequently, the periphery of the annular flange section B is liquid-tightly pressed on the inner surface of the opening 11. Concurrently with this, the flat surface H of the closing section 22 is brought into intimate contact with the rim of the opening 11. Therefore, the opening 11 of the specimen container 10 is liquid-tightly sealed ~~in good condition~~.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 18, as follows:

[2] The stopper 20 for tube-shaped specimen containers according to above item [1] is characterized in that the annular flange section B is shaped like a parabolic antenna and ~~have~~ has a tapered insertion end.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 6, as follows:

When the annular flange section B is pressed into the opening 11 of the tube-shaped specimen container 10, the notches V1 to V4 are narrowed by the compressive force received from the inner surface of the opening 11. Consequently, the outside diameter of the flange section B elastically varies with the inside diameter of the tube-shaped specimen container 10. Even though the outside diameter of the flange section B slightly differs from the inside diameter of the opening 11 (e.g., about ± 0.5 to 1.0 mm), the opening 11 can be liquid-tightly ~~be~~ sealed with the stopper 20. It was confirmed by experiment that a stopper whose annular flange section has an outside diameter of 10.5 mm could be used for both a specimen container whose opening has an inside diameter of 10 mm and a specimen container whose opening has an inside diameter of 11 mm without any trouble.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 1, as follows:

The annular flange sections B1, B2 ... fulfill a multiple function of preventing a leakage of liquid. ~~When the stopper 20 is applied to~~ and of accommodating specimen containers having different inside diameters, ~~the lack of liquid-tightness can be compensated with the multiple function.~~

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 13, as follows:

The stopper 20, which is improved in elastic deformation, liquid tightness, chemical resistance, heat resistance, etc., can ~~easily be~~ be easily manufactured.